1:Barnes E 5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni



his leadership, or who may have been part of his following before the migration began.[10]

The people led by Zwangendaba called themselves Ngoni, a name derived from Nguni, a term of salutation (*isithakazelo*) common to many agnatic clans in Natal. The tribes with whom the Ngoni fought referred to them by a wide variety of names and it is under these that they appear in the early literature. They were known as Angoni, Amapundi, Bangoni, Batuta, Bazowa, Bunga, Landeens, Landims, Machendi, Mafiti, Mafitte, Magwagwara, Makwangara,

TABLE I. LEADERS OF GROUPS IN THE 1820's

| | |
|---|---|
| Shaka | Effective head of the Mthethwa kingdom and founder of the Zulu empire. |
| Zwide | Ndandwe king, defeated by Shaka. |
| Soshangane | A classificatory younger brother of Zwide. |
| Zwangendaba | Independent minor chief, sometime ally of Zwide. |
| Mzilikazi | Originally independent leader who became one of Shaka's generals and later fled from him. |
| Nxaba | Independent minor chief who fled from Shaka. |

Mangone, Mangwangwara, Manitu, Maviti, Mavitu, Mazite, Mazitu, Mbunga, Mchecherere, Rugaruga, Sinyama, Waangwe, Wajoja, Wamachonde, Wamachote, Wangoni, Wapoma, Watuta, Zulu and Zulu Kaffirs.[11] Some of these names they shared with other tribes and bands of brigands.

### 4. *The residential system*

The Nguni men and women who made up the core of Zwangendaba's following were grouped together in agnatic lineages and in age-sets. Their captives were absorbed into this social structure and in the process the structure was inevitably altered to conform to the peculiar features of Ngoni life. The heads of the various distinct lineages under Zwangendaba, or at least some of them, became known as *regional governors*[12] and their lineages became

[10] Bryant, *Olden times*, pp. 158-71, 204-16; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, pp. 7-11.
[11] See Tew, *Lake Nyasa*, p. 93.
[12] *Mukumucana*, pl. *akumucana*. cf. Zulu, *umnumzana*, village headman; also Read, 'Tradition', p. 462.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni



bottom, seems the most acceptable.[23] Two other versions of this alleged dissension can also be rejected. Bryant says that the southern Nyasaland Ngoni remained behind after the main body had crossed the river and that they were led by Gwasa (*sic*), Zwangendaba's principal headman. Stigand's account is similar, except that he says they broke off after crossing the river. This conflicts with the evidence of Young and Chibambo of the subsequent part played by Gwaza, first lieutenant in segment 1, with Zwangendaba's own group. We must also reject the contention of Coxhead and Hodgson that the southern Nyasaland group broke away from the main body of Ngoni after Zwangendaba's death in Tanganyika Territory. The statement made by Stanley and followed by numerous other writers that the Hehe are an Ngoni group is quite without foundation.[24] Some other communities in southern Tanganyika who were merely raided by Ngoni have themselves taken the name Ngoni or some other name used by Ngoni.[25]

Poole speaks in one place of 'the secession of Nquaba' (Nxaba) from Zwangendaba, but this does not tally with his earlier statements that Nxaba's migration was independent of Zwangendaba, and that the first secession from Zwangendaba's host was that of the southern Nyasaland Ngoni. Bryant's account of Nxaba is much fuller than Poole's, and contradicts Poole's suggestion that Nxaba crossed the Zambezi at the Lupata Gorge. According to Bryant, Nxaba's group never formed part of Zwangendaba's following, and Nxaba was eventually killed in Barotseland. Chibambo and Winterbottom support Bryant.[26]

Posselt, who worked among Mzilikazi's people, states that a section of Zwangendaba's group, composed of Swazi, broke off at about the time of the Zambezi crossing and turned back to join Mzilikazi who married the woman who led the dissident section.

[23] The secession of the southern Nyasaland Ngoni from Mzilikazi may explain Wiese's and Decle's assertions that Zwangendaba himself broke away from Mzilikazi. Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 466; Decle, *Savage Africa*, p. 151.

[24] Murray, *Handbook*, p. 30; Young, *History*, p. 111, and letter in *African Studies*, 1950; Hatchell, 'Angoni' (1935), p. 69; Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 7; Bruwer, *Mbiri*, p. 11; Laws, p. 85, f.n.1, in Lugard, *East African Empire*, i; Johnson, *Nyasa*, p. 102; Soga, *South-Eastern Bantu*, p. 275; Lancaster, 'Chronology', pp. 78, 85; Elmslie, *Introductory Grammar*, p. x; Read, 'Tradition', p. 464; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 31; Winterbottom, 'Histories', p. 16; Fraser, *Primitive people*, pp. 312*f*; Bryant, *Olden times*, p. 465; Stigand, 'Natives', p. 126; Coxhead, *Native tribes*, p. 20; Hodgson, 'Dowa District', p. 128; Stanley, *Dark Continent*, i, pp. 499, 503; Rangeley, 'Mtwalo', pp. 56, 62.

[25] Maples, *Journals*, p. 15; Weule, *Native Life*, p. 339.

[26] Poole, *Native tribes*, pp. 7 and 6; Bryant, *Olden times*, pp. 277, 279, 434, 460*f*, 471*f*; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 16; Winterbottom, 'Outline histories', p. 16.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

MAP B. MPEZENI'S NGONILAND AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY 1890

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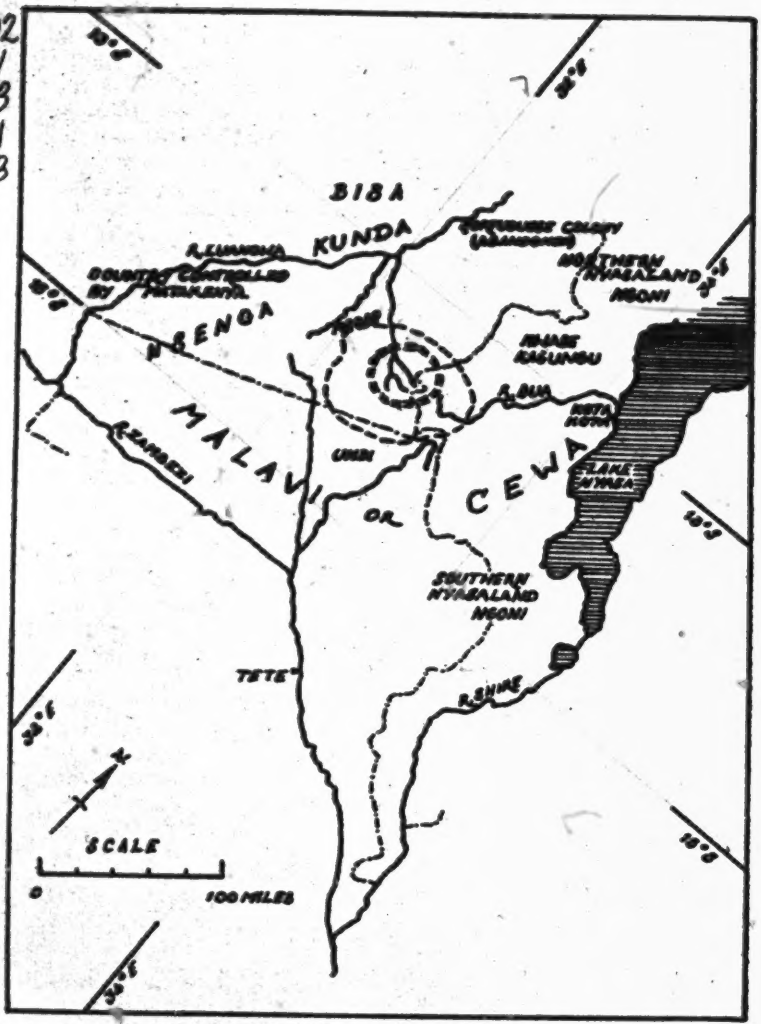


Area inhabited by Mpezeni's Ngoni.
Boundary of no-man's-land surrounding inhabited area.
Modern political boundaries (1950).

[p. 67]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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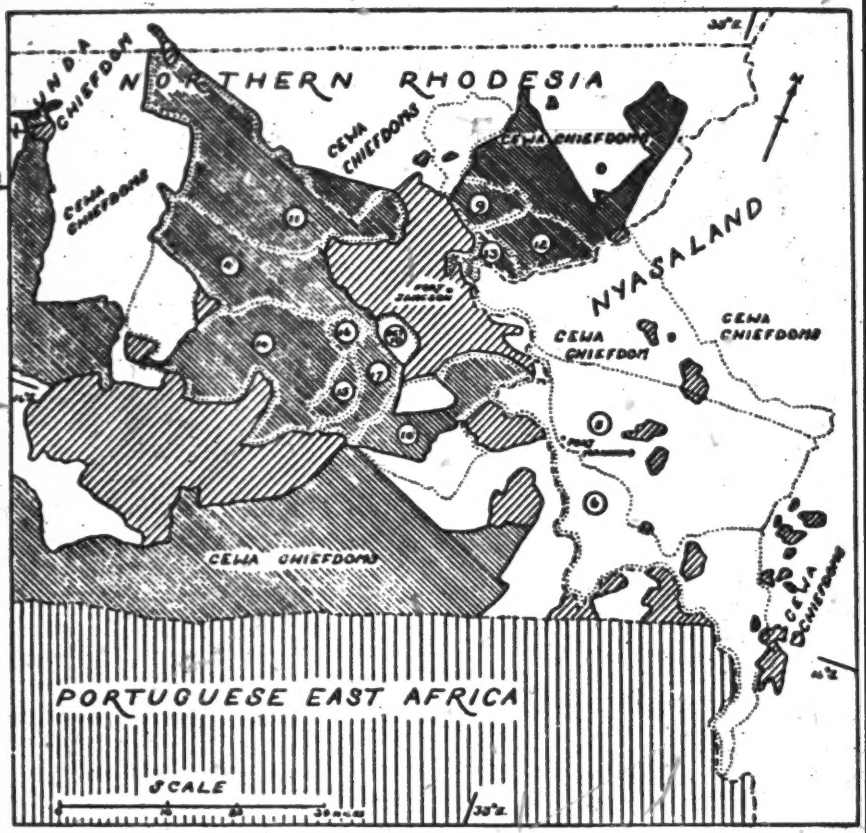
## MAP D. STATUTORY DIVISION OF LAND, FORT JAMIESON 1949




- International Boundary.
- N. Charterland Concession, Northern Boundary.
- Statutory Division Boundary.
- County Boundary.
- Farmland in non-African ownership.
- Native Reserves.
- Native Trust land, crown land and disputed land, treated as if it were Native Trust land.
- Portuguese East Africa.
- County numbers.

[p. 120]

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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## CHAPTER I

## THE NGONI PEOPLE

In the census of Nyasaland of 1945, there were 193,482 people enumerated as Ngoni. Their distribution extended from the extreme north in Karonga district through every other district to the extreme south in Port Herald district. There were concentrations of Ngoni people, however, as Table I shows, in the Mzimba district in the north, in the Dowa, Lilongwe, Dedza and Ncheu districts of the central province, and in the Blantyre district in the south. The Ngoni in the Mzimba district were known as Mbelwa's Ngoni [1] and will be called in this book the northern Ngoni Kingdom.

*Table I*

*Distribution of Ngoni in Nyasaland by Provinces and Districts from 1945 Census*

| | |
|---|---|
| Northern Province | *Total* 45,539 |
| Mzimba district | 44,948 |
| Karonga ,, | 295 |
| Chinteche ,, | 296 |
| Central Province* | *Total* 80,943 |
| Kasungu district | 2,539 |
| Dowa ,, | 20,329 |
| Lilongwe ,, | 17,707 |
| Dedza ,, | 14,757 |
| Ncheu ,, | 15,242 |
| Kotakota ,, | 4,838 |
| Fort Manning ,, | 5,531 |
| Southern Province | *Total* 67,000 |
| Blantyre district | 25,224 |
| Zomba ,, | 6,972 |
| Liwonde ,, | 7,572 |
| Neno ,, | 10,211 |
| Cholo ,, | 9,185 |
| Fort Johnston ,, | 1,343 |
| Chikwawa ,, | 1,029 |
| Chiradzulu ,, | 4,655 |
| Mlanje ,, | 751 |
| Port Herald ,, | 58 |
| Total | *193,482* |

* In 1931 this was included in the Northern Province.

[1] Tew, M. *Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region.* O.U.P., 1950, p. 91.



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2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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the northern Ngoni kingdom. Other groups of these Ngoni were found in three separate states in the Dowa and Kotakota districts. The Ngoni in the Ncheu district were known as Gomani's Ngoni and will be called in this book the central Ngoni kingdom. Four states which separated from this kingdom were found in the Dedza, Lilongwe and Cholo districts. The Ngoni in Fort Manning district belonged to Mpeseni's kingdom in the Fort Jameson district of Northern Rhodesia.

According to these census figures, the northern Ngoni kingdom with the three separated states accounted for 69,706; the central kingdom with the four separated states accounted for 46,891. Leaving out the Fort Manning Ngoni, there were 71,354 Ngoni in the rest of Nyasaland who had at one time formed part of the northern and central kingdoms and their offshoots, but who had dispersed in search of work and had made large settlements in the towns and on the estates of the southern province where employment was to be found. A similar dispersion from the main Ngoni concentrations in Nyasaland to Southern and Northern Rhodesia and the Union of South Africa had taken place which formed part of the extensive emigration from Nyasaland in search of better employment than that available in the territory.

The existence of two Ngoni kingdoms, several smaller Ngoni states, and a still larger number of people enumerated as Ngoni but dispersed in every district of Nyasaland, poses a number of problems for the anthropologist. In this book I have concentrated on the two Ngoni kingdoms and on the Ngoni culture found in them in the 1930's. It was my intention, by focusing on the two kingdoms, to show that there was an Ngoni culture which had common elements in both areas and hence was shared to some extent by all the Ngoni living in Nyasaland. We shall be asking the questions in Part I—Who can be called Ngoni? What is Ngoni culture? Why do people in every district of Nyasaland enumerate themselves as Ngoni though a large number no longer live in the Ngoni kingdoms or in the Ngoni states? Are we discussing a people whose cultural affiliation survives political dispersal? The chief problem in the relation between the Ngoni kingdoms as political states and Ngoni culture will be stated in Part I and illustrated and analysed in the rest of the book. In this chapter, we shall examine the ethnic composition of the inhabitants of the two Ngoni kingdoms.

## ETHNIC ELEMENTS IN THE NGONI KINGDOMS

There were four main groups of people in the Ngoni kingdoms, distinguished by the areas from which their ancestors came and designated by the Ngoni as 'those from the south', 'those from south of the Zambesi', 'those from the march' and 'those from this country'. The Ngoni said that the clan descent name of a person showed to which group he or she belonged.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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these Ngoni before they were defeated and driven out of Songea by the Gama group of Ngoni.

The northern Ngoni, who travelled east of the Luangwa valley into Tanganyika, acquired followers with clan descent names from the Nsenga in Northern Rhodesia and the Safwa and Sukuma in Tanganyika.

(*d*) '*Those from this country*'

Under this category were included all the local peoples in Nyasaland who either were conquered by the Ngoni or surrendered to them, and who were brought within the rule of the Ngoni kingdoms. These in the northern kingdom were chiefly of Tumbuka and Henga clans, with others from Cewa and Bemba stock. In the central kingdom the local clan names were of Cewa and Yao origin.

Two conclusions emerge from this review of the ethnic composition of the Ngoni kingdoms. The first is that the use of Ngoni as a tribal designation causes confusion. In this study the term Ngoni will be used when referring to persons whose clan descent names show that their ancestors were of Swazi or trans-Zambesi stock—that is categories (*a*) and (*b*) in this chapter. This criterion of who were Ngoni would probably not correspond with the criteria used in the 1945 census enumeration. The enumerators may have asked a direct question, 'Are you Ngoni?'; they may have asked the person's clan descent name; they may have asked to which kingdom or chiefdom he belonged; or they may have asked all four questions or any two. Since the Ngoni were found in every district in the country it was likely that there was little uniformity in the form of the questions asked by the enumerators or in the criteria admitted by those being questioned for declaring themselves to be Ngoni.

The second conclusion is that even if the criterion is accepted that the Ngoni were those whose ancestors crossed the Zambesi, the Ngoni kingdoms as political states included all the four elements (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*). The status of the ethnically distinct groups in the kingdoms varied according to their clan names which indicated whether they came from the south or had been incorporated at a later stage. Ngoni forms of culture were found not only in groups (*a*) and (*b*), as would be expected, but often among families in group (*c*) who, through fighting in the Ngoni armies and marrying into Ngoni families, had adopted their social and ritual pattern.[1]

[1] Since the first draft of this book was written, Dr. Barnes's study of the Fort Jameson Ngoni, *Politics in a Changing Society* (O.U.P., 1954), has appeared. The early history of the Ngoni in the northern kingdom is the same as that of the Fort Jameson Ngoni, up to the final separation of the kingdoms under Mpeseni and Mbelwa. Dr. Barnes's excellent bibliography gives the sources for the historical documentation of their travels. A brief sketch of the history of the two groups under the leadership of the Jere and Maseko Paramounts is given in Mary Tew's *Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region*.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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Ngoni, he was welcomed everywhere as one who could speak with authority about the culture and customs of his people, and the central Ngoni, when talking about their history and customs, wanted him to realize that they too were 'real Ngoni' (*Ngoni eni eni*). The general relationships before 1939 were that the political separation between the kingdoms and their secession states was accepted as final. On the social and cultural level, the Ngoni from one state sought contacts with the Ngoni from another state or kingdom in preference to contacts with other ethnic groups. In using the term Ngoni in this context, as throughout this book, I am referring to people with Swazi and trans-Zambesi clan descent names.

## THE MAIN POLITICAL ELEMENTS IN THE NGONI KINGDOMS

The District Commissioner of Ncheu in his report for 1935, after the Native Administration Ordinance had been in operation for over a year, wrote of the central Ngoni kingdom: 'The tribal system is, comparatively speaking, intact under a chief who commands universal respect.' [1] The political system of the Ngoni in both kingdoms was based on a ruling aristocracy in which the Paramount of the royal clan was the head, supported by influential members of his own clan and of other leading clans. There were three main elements in this ruling aristocracy: the Paramount, with whose office was linked provision for a regency at the death of the incumbent and during the minority of his successor; the subordinate chiefs who ruled under him in recognized areas; and the heads of Swazi clans called *alumuzana*. I shall use these terms, chiefs and *alumuzana*, when speaking of the Ngoni kingdoms. In the northern kingdom all six chiefs was of the royal clan. In the central kingdom none of the six chiefs were of the royal clan but, with one exception, all were recognized as *alumuzana*. This distribution of authority among the six chiefs under the Paramount in the northern kingdom meant that several of the leading *alumuzana* felt excluded from political control of the villages and area which they were said to 'own', because they had no recognized court. This led at times to friction between them and the chiefs of the royal clan. In the central kingdom the position was different, for though some *alumuzana* were recognized as chiefs, others were not, and friction occurred at times between the chiefs and other *alumuzana*, and also between the chiefs and members of the royal clan. In both areas allegiance to the Paramount was, however, a strong unifying element.

The ruling aristocracy was in its turn supported by a hierarchy of officials, some traditional, some appointed to meet modern requirements

[1] *Annual Report of the Provincial Commissioner for the Nyasaland Protectorate*. 1935. p. 34.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956

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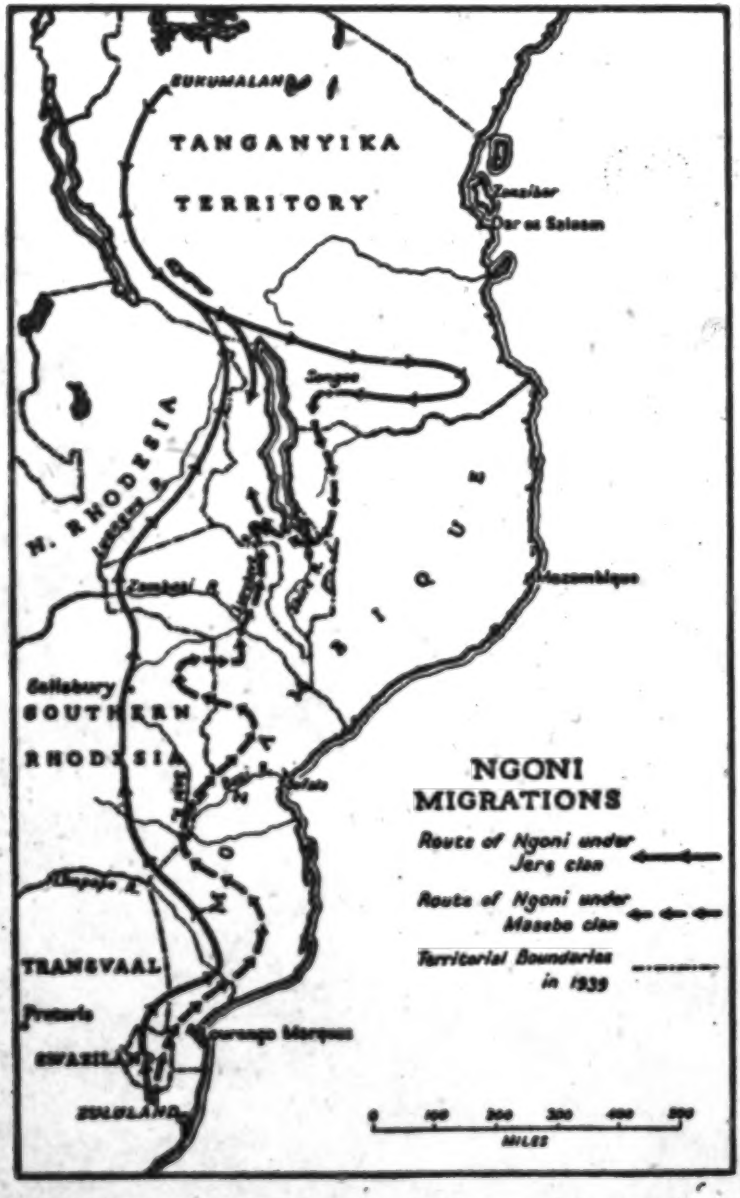

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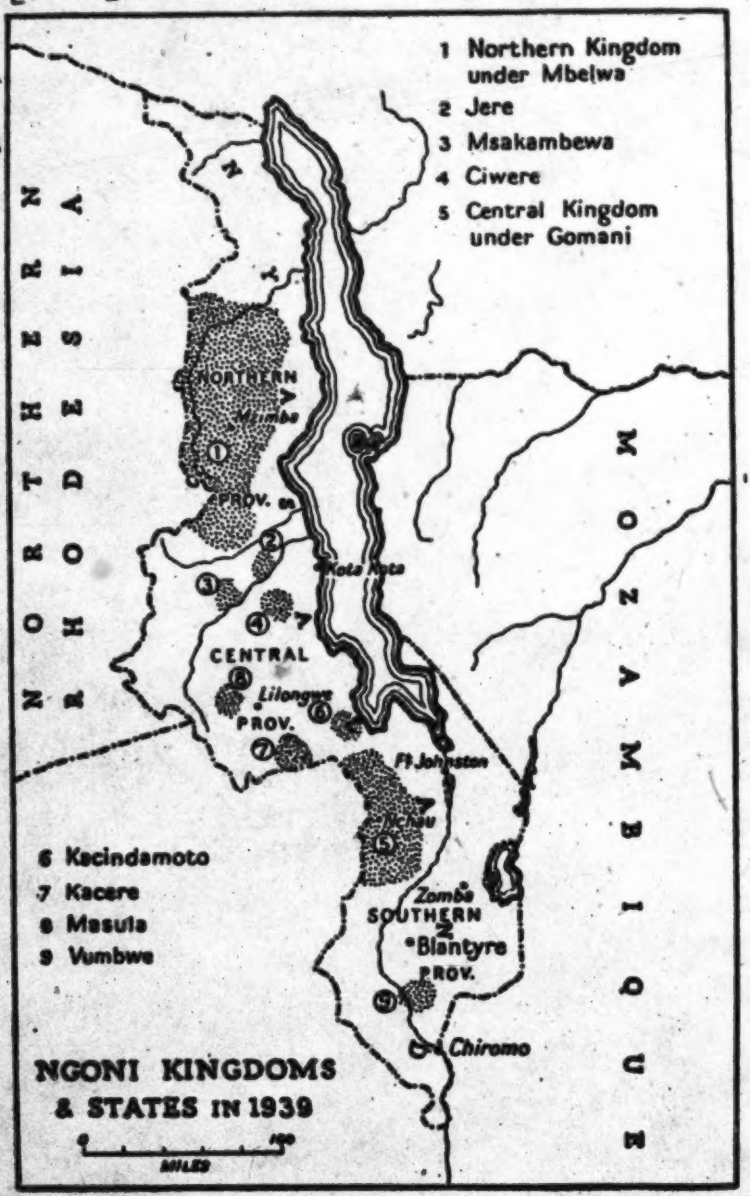

that despite the vicissitudes of history there is some unbroken but continually changing system of social relationships which we may call Ngoni social structure, and that there is therefore some point in comparing Ngoni marriage in the 1890's with Ngoni marriage to-day; and on the other hand may prepare the way for a broader analysis of Ngoni kinship, of which marriage is one part.

The Fort Jameson Ngoni, with whom alone we are concerned in this paper, differ considerably from the other Ngoni groups in Africa and there is evidence that there are differences in marriage arrangements even from the nearby groups in Northern and Southern Nyasaland. The Fort Jameson Ngoni, numbering about 85,000, live in the Fort Jameson District of Northern Rhodesia and in the Fort Manning division of Lilongwe District of Nyasaland. Their country stretches from 13°25'S to 14°S latitude and from 32°10'E to 35°15'E longitude. Like other Ngoni groups they have a history of migration from Natal at the time of the rise of the Zulu under Shaka in the 1820's. They arrived at their present abode in about 1870 and were conquered by British troops in 1898. The leader of the group was Mpezeni I, and the present Paramount Chief, Mpezeni III, is his son's son's son. There are ten county chieftainships in Northern Rhodesia and two in Nyasaland, and each chief has his own court. The people live by subsistence cultivation, with maize as the main crop. A little maize and some cattle are sold to the local European-owned tobacco farms and in the township of Fort Jameson, but the principal source of money income is work on the farms or at the urban centres of Southern Rhodesia and the railway line of Northern Rhodesia. Many women and almost all men have been to Southern Rhodesia at some time or other[1].

[1] For an outline account of the social structure of this group, see Barnes, 'The Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 194 - 282 in Elizabeth Colson and Max Gluckman, eds., *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa*, London, Oxford University Press, 1951.

5: Allan C-5 (1941) 1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni



low productivity and little power of recovery. Next, the weaker soils will be abandoned: such data as we have suggests that this stage is reached when grain yields fall below 200 lb. per acre in the normal season. The former cultivators of the abandoned land may then offer work in exchange for the food surplus still enjoyed by the holders of the stronger soils, or they may be entitled to a share of the surplus by virtue of kinship obligations. In this way a period of increasing pressure and accelerated erosion on the stronger and more fertile soils is brought about. These stages will commonly be accompanied by migration of able-bodied men to the centres of employment and the stage finally be reached when the area is dependent to a large extent on food purchased from outside sources.

In 1941 a study was made of a highly congested area in Fort Jameson District; the area of Mpezeni, Paramount Chief of the Ngoni. The chieftaincy was found to be 54,000 acres in extent and, after detailed survey, the carrying capacity for traditional Ngoni agriculture was estimated to be about 1,300 to 1,400 persons. A total of 7,700 people, between five and six times the carrying capacity, were supposedly living within the chieftaincy. In short, an area which, because of the high proportion of mountain country, had a critical density of only about 16 persons per square mile did in fact appear to be carrying over 90 to the square mile.

The main reasons for the continued survival of this population were found to be as follows:

(a) The time during which these conditions had existed (about 15 years) was not sufficient to show the full effects of this degree of land pressure.

(b) Great areas of hill country and dambos, which would not normally be cultivated, had been taken into cultivation. The almost incredible mountain cultivation on the Nyamfinzi range was, until recently, a startling spectacle. Use of dambo grassland for *fipoka* gardens had seriously reduced grazing and was a sore point with the cattle-loving Ngoni.

(c) Under extreme pressure the population had burst its bounds and an irresistible tide had inundated adjoining private land and unoccupied European farms. In addition, a missionary organization had permitted cultivation, on payment, on land owned by the mission. By these means the effective acreage had, in fact, been increased by almost 50 per cent.

(d) A very heavy burden had been thrown on the limited soils of high fertility and resistance to erosion, the only soils left in the original area still carrying moderately good crops. These soils, then in continuous cultivation, were feeding more than twice as many people as they would normally do.

(e) The Paramount Chief was importing from Nyasaland each year a considerable quantity of food for the use of his people.

5: Allan C-5 (1941) 1949

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PART IV

# THE RESETTLEMENT OF NATIVE POPULATIONS IN NORTHERN RHODESIA

## § 1. *The Problem and its Origin*

IN Northern Rhodesia and doubtless over a much greater part of Africa before the coming of the Europeans, the population-land pattern was a changing, kaleidoscopic picture. If an area became overcrowded more land was available, or it could be taken from a neighbouring people. A rough balance between land and population was maintained by means of migration, inter-tribal wars, periodic famine and disease.

With the coming of the European the kaleidoscopic picture was arrested, producing what we may call the primary population-land pattern. This was later modified, by alienation and reservation of land and by the movement of peoples into Native reserves, to produce a secondary pattern. New economic factors have so far modified this secondary pattern only to a minor extent, but it may be expected that they will tend to do so increasingly in the future.

The secondary population-land pattern was brought about mainly by the movement of the African population into Native reserves. As a result of this movement large areas of Crown Land were left practically uninhabited, and a number of factors operating together brought about mal-distribution and congestion of populations within the reserves themselves.

So far the problem has been studied in detail only in the Fort Jameson and Petauke Districts of the Eastern Province, the Mkushi District of the Central Province and the Ndola District of the Western Province, and it is within these districts that resettlement work—other than the 'Chitemene Control' scheme—has been carried out. The four districts are contiguous and the total area within them to which this discussion refers is about 33,800 square miles (4,000 square miles more than the whole land area of Scotland but only about one-ninth of the area of Northern Rhodesia) with a total population, in round figures, of 290,000 (about one-sixth of the total populaton of the Territory).

The primary population-land pattern was such that the ten tribes living within this area had ample or much more than ample land, except to a minor extent in the Fort Jameson District where the incursion of the immigrant Ngoni in the later 19th century had created a potential congestion problem. Under former conditions this problem would doubtless have resolved itself as it arose by migration of the Chewa to north and west, under pressure from the Ngoni, but once the kaleidoscopic pattern was arrested no such

5: Allan C-5 (1941)1949 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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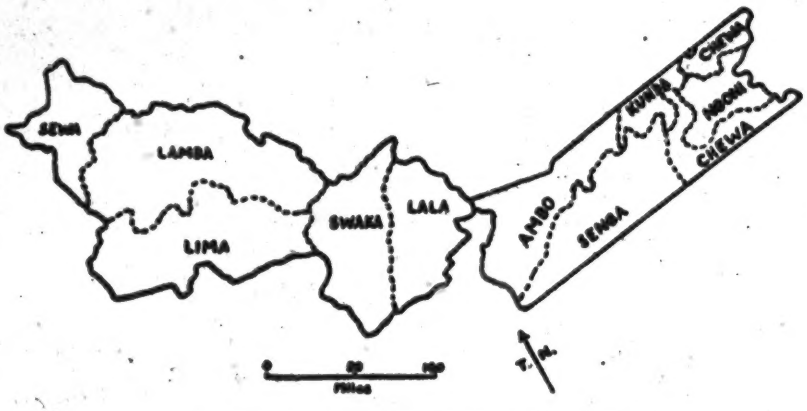


Fig 1.— THE ORIGINAL POPULATION-LAND PATTERN
Showing areas held by tribes.

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movement was possible. The lands of the Ngoni and Chewa were then reduced, by alienation to European settlers and by reservation, to an extent which the following figures illustrate:

*Habitable Land held by Tribes (square miles)*

| | *Chewa* | *Ngoni* * |
|---|---|---|
| Before Ngoni invasion | 3,580 | – |
| After Ngoni invasion | 2,280 | 1,300 |
| After land alienation | 1,124 | 878 |
| After creation of reserves | 889 | 675 |

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Throughout the Petauke and Mkushi Districts the amount of land taken up by European settlers was negligible, but the Senga, Ambo, Lala and Swaka peoples were moved into Reserves some of which proved totally inadequate for the land needs of their traditional agricultural systems.

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In the west (Ndola District) the congestion problem arose largely as a result of displacement of people from the area which is now the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia, a land loss which fell on the Lamba tribe. The land area of Mushiri's section of the Lamba, for example, which formerly included part of the Copperbelt, was reduced from 2,200 to 360 square miles. The Lamba were removed from the new mining areas and this movement accentuated by some migration of more distant peoples attracted by the mines, gave rise to a belt of relatively high population concentration about the southern and eastern margins of the Copperbelt.

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* With a mixture of Chewa and other tribes.

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5



are unknown, and he talks, "having regard rather to the poetical feeling than to the grammatical position and syntax of a word." But enclitics, tense particles, concords, the various forms of the verb (applied, causative, intensive, reversive, etc.), and all those auxiliary particles such as *ba*, *ka*, *ngo*, *dzi*, and enclitic particles such as *-nso*, *-be*, *-tu*, etc., by which all the finer shades of meaning are expressed, he uses absolutely correctly, and it is with a view of understanding, and making oneself understood, to the raw, uneducated element among these natives, that one should go to the trouble of learning this language.

The customs, stories, etc., recorded herein are those of the natives inhabiting Central Angoniland. They are descendants, for the most part through intermarriage with the Achewa, of the Zulus who came from south of the Zambezi, scattering as they advanced, under different leaderships; those under *Gwaza* (the father of *Sakambewa*), and his *nduna Chiwere*, settling at Dowa; *Mpezeni*, a son of *Gwaza*, settling near Fort Jameson. *Mputa*, the father of *Chikusi*, after reaching as far as Lake Chirwa, and raiding the Anguru under *Sinjaubwereka*, came to Domwe, near Dedza, under promise of cattle from *Sosola*, a *Chipeta*, or *Nchewa* chief. (*Chipeta* and *Nchewa* are synonymous, the former word being a sobriquet bestowed on the *Achewa* who came on to the Angoniland plateau, by the *Achewa* who settled on the Lake shore, the latter referring to the former as the *a chipeta*, i. e. they of the *chipeta* (long grass)). Intermingled with these customs, borrowed for the most part by the conquerors from the conquered, are to be found traces here and there, and here and there a word, which strike the key-note of their past history, now all but forgotten even by themselves. But what is of their

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5



past, and what of their present, will be clear to one who has made a more minute study of their Zulu ancestors than the writer had time or opportunity to do. Whatever be of merit in this little work, the writer owes to the Rev. Alexander Hetherwick, D.D., to whose kindness and courtesy in teaching him Chinyanja, when he first came to the country, he owes all that is best in his knowledge of the language.

MANDALA,
BRITISH CENTRAL AFRICA,
*January* 1, 1906.

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7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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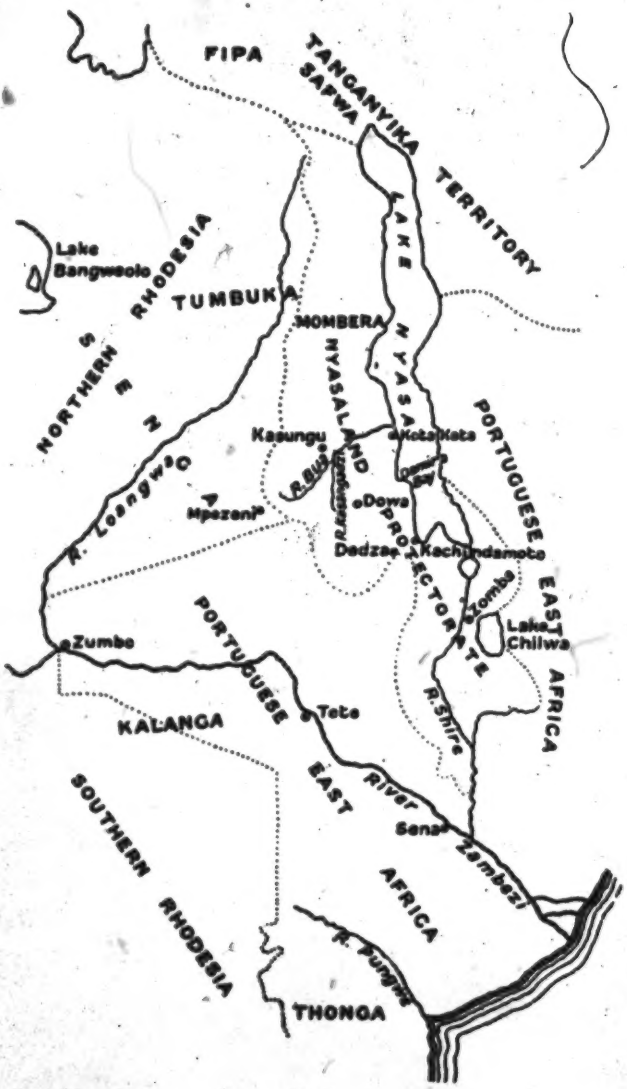


MAP I.

7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5 ● Maravi FR4



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MAP 2.

7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4



M 175 [241] [167] N 175 101 N 174 N 101 M N 648 M N 141 121

Livingstone found chief Mwase, at Kasungu, ruling over "a section of Mang'anja, called Machewa, or Macheba[1]."

For some years the Achewa enjoyed a peaceful existence in their new home, keeping cattle, but living mainly by agriculture, until their tranquility was disturbed by the Ngoni invasion and by the slave raids of the Jumbe[2] at Kota Kota. By these the eastern branch of Achewa was continually harassed; and consequently in 1893 Dzoole, Kanyenda and others of the house of Karonga moved south to the Kasangadzi and Mtiti Rivers, and in 1896 handed over this part of the country to the protection of the British Government.

The Angoni, under the name of Mazitu, were described by Livingstone as Zulus,[3] and this terminological error has been copied by more than one subsequent writer. Of their earlier wanderings no record has been traced. Owing, perhaps, to their lighter colour it has been surmised that they came from far up the east coast; but it is known that under the style of Abe-nguni, derived from an ancient chief Mnguni, they were settled on the Dedesi, a small tributary of the upper St. John's River, when the Aba-mbo first arrived in Natal about 1620.[4] In this locality they remained for a couple of centuries, till towards the end of his reign the notorious Zulu king Chaka fell upon their allies the Ama-ndwandwe under Zwide. A section of the Abe-nguni then migrated northwards under Zwangendaba; and wherever they went they fought and subdued the peoples through whose country they passed, seizing cattle and incorporating captives in their own tribe. After raiding the Aba-suto, Ama-awazi, Aba-thonga[5] and Ama-kalanga, they crossed the Zambezi near Zumbo at the time of the total eclipse of the sun on the 19th of November, 1835,[6] and overran the territories of the Aba-senga, A-tumbuka, A-safwa and A-mandewere till they came to the land of the Wa-fipa and Wa-sukuma.

Here Zwangendaba (or Songandawa, as he is generally called in Nyasaland) died, and his following broke up and scattered in different directions. While others advanced to the north and east, four sections turned back, one under Mombera to the Tumbuka country, another under Mpezeni to the Loangwa river, the third under Chiwere to Dowa, and the fourth under Chikusi still further south. It is with the third section that we are now dealing. The hybrid nature of the Dowa Angoni can be inferred from the list of clans given in a subsequent section (IV, 2). During the last four decades they have intermarried still further with the Achewa, and there are now few, if any, pure-blooded Angoni in the district. Their paramount chief, Chiwere, though calling himself an Mngoni, is in reality an Msenga.

The general features, characteristics and habits of these peoples are akin to those of neighbouring tribes which have been described by the Reverend Duff Macdonald,[7] Miss Alice Werner

[1] D. and C. Livingstone: *loc. cit.*, pp. 526, 548.

[2] A coast Arab, acting as *wali*, or representative, of the Sultan of Zanzibar.

[3] D. and C. Livingstone: *loc. cit.*, p. 381.

[4] Eric A. Walker: *Historical Atlas of South Africa*, p. 6. J. H. Soga: *The South-Eastern Bantu*, pp. 81, *et seq.*

[5] In *ph* and *th* each consonant is pronounced. Similarly, in *au* and *oo* each vowel is pronounced.

[6] E. H. L. Poole: *Journal African Society*, vol. xxix, No. cxv, p. 200.

[7] Rev. Duff Macdonald, *Africana*. Miss Alice Werner, *The Natives of British Central Africa*. Dr. H. S. Stannus, *The Wayao of Nyasaland*, Harvard African Studies III, *Varia Africana* III, pp. 229-372, "Notes on Some Tribes of British Central Africa," *Journ. Roy. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xl. 1910, pp. 285-305, etc., etc.

9: Read E-5 (1935) 1936 FR5 Ngoni FR5



# TRADITION AND PRESTIGE AMONG THE NGONI

*MARGARET READ*

I. THE NGONI PEOPLE. Before I made my first camp in an Ngoni village, many Europeans had said to me, 'There are practically no Ngoni left to-day. They are all hopelessly mixed with other tribes. None of them keep to the Ngoni customs any longer. Their chiefs are no good.' From the doorway of my hut I saw people coming all day long to the Paramount Chief, behaving towards him with profound respect, bringing him presents, working for him. His children formed a special group in the village, easily recognizable by their bearing and their manners. Old *indunas*[1] came to instruct me, as they had instructed chiefs in their day, on the duties of a ruler, and the code of Ngoni laws. Old warriors in war dress came and danced by the cattle kraal and sang praise songs. Courts were held with scrupulous regard for order and justice. Other chiefs came visiting from distant parts with their retinues, and were received ceremonially. It soon became apparent that here was the centre of a political state, whose head was invested with prestige and authority over a wide area, and where behaviour to the Paramount and to every one else was strictly regulated by custom, and as strictly observed. These were Ngoni, and they and their fellow Ngoni in other areas[1] for the next ten months introduced me to the Ngoni people. The European assertion, that they no longer existed as a people, they laughed at, and proceeded to demonstrate that the contrary was true.

The Ngoni are found to-day scattered over four East African territories. The largest groups are in Nyasaland in the districts of Mzimba, Dowa, Fort Manning, Dedza, and Ncheu. In Northern Rhodesia they are in the Fort Jameson and Lundazi districts bordering on Nyasaland. Another section is in Portuguese East Africa on the South-West border of Nyasaland. Under other names there are Ngoni settlements in Tanganyika Territory. The present divisions of the Ngoni are due partly to European frontiers, partly to the fact that more than

[1] According to the census returns there are about 80,000 Ngoni in Northern Rhodesia and nearly 250,000 in Nyasaland, with other groups in Tanganyika Territory and Portuguese East Africa.

[1] [i.e., military leaders.—Analyst]

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one party of them came up from the south, and partly to divisions among the Ngoni during the period of settlement.

About 115 years ago the ancestors of these Ngoni left their homes in the present Zululand and Swaziland for their long trek north. The immediate cause of their departure was the defeat of Zwidi, chief of the Ndwandwe people, by Chaka, the history of whose military career in Zululand is well known and needs no repetition here. As part of Zwidi's people, the Ngoni did not want to stay under Chaka, and the same impetus and military skill which set up Chaka as the Zulu Napoleon drove the Ngoni northward as far as Lake Tanganyika, a conquering military horde amassing followers on the way. To-day they are found in three large groups and several smaller ones, the large groups known as the 'countries' of Mpezeni, Mwambera, and Gomani, who are the Ngoni Paramount Chiefs.[1]

These groups of people with their southern origin, settled among people who had a totally different language and social structure, present to the anthropologist a highly complex situation to investigate. He must at the outset ask the questions, 'Who are these Ngoni? Have they a separate identity as a people, marked by distinctive social and political institutions?' After living among them for nearly a year I am convinced that it is correct to speak of the Ngoni as a distinctive group; that they themselves are very conscious of their separate identity as a people, and that they can point to certain of their institutions, notably their language and political, territorial, and kinship groupings, which are definitely Ngoni, that is, of southern origin, and which distinguish them from the people among whom they settled. The complexities of this situation involve the analysing of the ethnic elements included in this term 'Ngoni' and the determining of the sense in which it is to be used. They involve also an explanation of what is meant by the expression 'a distinctive Ngoni culture', or 'distinctive Ngoni institutions'. The anthropologist who is interested in culture contact must go further and indicate the nature of the double contact caused first by the intermingling of the Ngoni with other tribes, and then by the advent of the Europeans. It is not possible in this article to do justice to all these aspects of an intricate problem.

[1] For the purposes of this article these are the only groups which will be considered.

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Stated very briefly, the problem is this: an Ngoni aristocratic minority created an Ngoni 'state' of mixed ethnic units, imposed a national identity on all who formed part of it, and inspired a real 'national feeling' among those who were assimilated. In this article I propose to look at this problem as it exists to-day in the light of white contact, and more particularly as a prelude to Indirect Rule. My thesis is that Ngoni 'national feeling' is based on the traditions of their past—on the story of their southern origin, their trek from the south, and their settlement in their present areas. I shall show how the continued preservation of their distinctive institutions, together with their strong historical sense, gave them a dominant position in the country, which was enforced through their military and political supremacy. This supremacy was first challenged and then overthrown by the arrival of the Europeans and the defeat of the Ngoni military power. The situation thus created is the key to the Ngoni attitude towards white contact to-day.

The plan of work which I adopted at the beginning had as its aim the establishing of certain essential data—namely, to determine the principles of local or territorial settlement in relation to the political organization and the ethnic constitution of the area. This involved making maps of the Paramount Chief's 'country' and of the 'countries' of his subordinate chiefs, showing the areas over which individuals exercised authority and their relation to those above and below them in the political hierarchy. It also involved making a number of village plans, showing the alignment of houses on the village site, the names and clans of the inhabitants and their mutual relations in terms of kinship groups and village organization.[1] In villages called Ngoni villages, that is, where the 'owner' of the village was of a recognized Ngoni clan and where there was a nucleus of Ngoni clansmen, the individuals in Ngoni clans numbered from 25–75 per cent. of the total inhabitants, the average being about 45 per cent. In a number of the villages where no Ngoni clans were represented, the villagers nevertheless asserted, 'We are Ngoni, because we are the

[1] This collecting of village plans was viewed with some suspicion at first as a new way of helping the Government to catch tax defaulters. However, when I promised the Paramount Chief that no one in the locality should see the village plans, he sent out word that I was to be given all the information I needed, and no one need fear the consequences.

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people of Mpezeni'. When questioned, they acknowledged their local origin as Nsenga or Chewa by kinship and clan, but claimed the name Ngoni in terms of their political allegiance. It is worth while mentioning here that this claim to be Ngoni is made with even more force when men are away from home on the mines or at other work. I found men on the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt and in Johannesburg assert emphatically that they were Ngoni because they were the people of Mpezeni or Gomani, at the same time giving their clan names with a grin because they knew it would reveal their Chewa or Nsenga origin. It is 'the thing' to pass as Ngoni if you can carry it off and in strange places—where the acid test of the clan name is not known—it is easy to do this. A group of Nyasaland men newly arrived on the Crown Mines in Johannesburg told me confidentially, 'Here we say only, "We are all Ngoni". You know that our clan names are Chewa or Tumbuka, but we are the people of Gomani or of Mwambera, and so we say we are Ngoni. And then people are respecting us.' The prestige in the name Ngoni is a matter of pride, not only in their own country, but far and wide in Africa.

The chiefs and other important men among the Ngoni recognize that they are a very mixed group ethnically. When asked, 'What is the meaning of a clan?' they reply, 'It shows a man's tribe that we may know how to respect him.'[1] It is hardly correct, therefore, to speak of the Ngoni as a tribe, for from Natal to Tanganyika men of many 'tribes' joined, or were captured and forcibly assimilated by, the original nucleus of Zulu and Swazi warriors, to be welded by their

[1] I avoid using vernacular terms in this article because usually the Ngoni, Chewa, Nsenga, and Tumbuka terms are all different. The field worker has to make a comparative linguistic table giving equivalent meanings in vernacular terms. Here I use the English word 'clan' to express the unilateral group according to kinship descent. 'Tribe' should be used in a cultural sense, of a group of people possessing a common language and common institutions. The ambiguity with which 'tribe' and its vernacular equivalents is used, by Europeans and Africans alike, necessitates an investigation on linguistic and historical lines. The so-called Chewa tribe, for example, rarely, if ever, use the word Chewa, but refer to themselves as Ntumba, Maravi, &c. The Ngoni, speaking of themselves in the south, refer to the Ndwandwe, Ntungwa, &c., and only use the 'blanket term' Zulu or Swazi when they think you are ignorant of the finer distinctions. I use the word 'tribe' here to express these distinctive groups, but it is impossible to avoid some ambiguity without long linguistic digressions.

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political and military organization into an effective group. What meaning, therefore, can we give to the term 'Ngoni', and how can this group which calls itself Ngoni be analysed into its component parts?

II. WHAT DOES THE TERM 'NGONI' MEAN? The references made hitherto show that the term 'Ngoni' is used in several different connotations. It is, strictly speaking, an historical linguistic term, and referred originally to that group of clans described as 'Nguni' because they spoke a language classified to-day as the Nguni dialects.[1] Somewhere on the march north the Ngoni changed the *u* to an *o*, and arrived in their present areas saying 'We are Ngoni'. They assert emphatically that it was on the march they began to say 'We are Ngoni', and they suggest that it was important to have some general term to cover individuals from many mixed groups.

The name Ngoni having been assumed on the march north, it obviously at first only covered those clans which were of true southern origin, or as we should say to-day, of Zulu or Swazi stock. This is the meaning which Ngoni still has when used in its narrow or strict sense to-day. In collecting the clan names in a village, for example, the headman says 'Those are Ngoni, those are Makalanga, those are Nsenga', and so on. The true Ngoni clans are those most highly honoured, the real aristocrats, and a little experience teaches the field worker to recognize their bearing as they walk about among the rest. In a village containing several clans, the houses of the Ngoni clans occupy the most honourable places in the middle of the horse-shoe formation surrounding the cattle kraal. In any meeting at a chief's village the men and women of Ngoni clans sit nearest to the chief and drink beer before the rest. This ranking by clans, however, does not stop at the true Ngoni. They lead the hierarchy, but other clans also claim precedence in a rough geographical order of the tribes absorbed from south to north. The true Ngoni illustrate this by saying, 'In old days the only men who were made *indunas* were those of the Swazi, Zulu, Suto, and Tonga clans. After we settled here, *indunas* were made from the Makalanga, Nsenga, and Sukuma clans'. There is therefore

[1] See *Bantu Studies*, Sept. 1934, for classification of the South African languages. Also A. T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, for list of Nguni clans.

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a hierarchy of rank expressed in the clan names, and this rank is evident in the position of houses on a village site, and the degree of authority exercised by the clans and the respect[1] accorded to them. In effect, all those whose ancestors were absorbed before the final break up of the main Ngoni group are recognized as having some claim to the name Ngoni. The rest, that is the clans found in the areas where the Ngoni finally settled are, or rather were, regarded as conquered or slave people.

We have seen, however, that there is a much wider sense in which the term Ngoni is used—that is, by all who live under the rule of the Paramount Chief. This extended usage is due to the prestige and honour in which the stricter meaning of Ngoni is held. It was illustrated in the instance of the Nyasaland men in Johannesburg, who all claimed to be Ngoni because they had discovered at once that the name commanded respect among the mixture of tribes to be found on the mines. *Indunas* and other leading men sometimes make use of this wider connotation when boasting about the large numbers of people owning allegiance to the Ngoni Paramount Chief, compared with the other petty chieftainships. 'All those in the country of Mpezeni are Ngoni. All are his people.' At the same time they make it clear that there is a distinction between the real Ngoni and the other subjects of the Paramount—a distinction which formerly was much sharper than it is to-day. All are the people of the Paramount, it is true, but in old days the majority of the non-Ngoni were called slaves. To this day the Ngoni when angry may call out to some one, 'Chewa, Chewa', implying 'Slave, slave', and be hauled to the chief's court for insulting language. There the chief will take pains to point out that there are no slaves to-day, and that no Ngoni must 'spoil the country' by insulting the people of the Paramount.

It is, I think, clear that there is a connotation in which the term Ngoni can be used with some degree of scientific accuracy—that is, to cover all those clans which are not belonging to the local tribes, or, in an even stricter sense, the clans of indubitably southern origin.

[1] This word 'respect' is constantly in use among the Ngoni. It implies both 'honour' and 'fear', and they sometimes use one word and sometimes the other. It really means, 'to give a person his due', that is, to behave towards him (or her) in the manner which his rank requires.

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We have also to recognize that the wider connotation of the word is in constant use to-day, and it will be apparent in the course of this article that those who like to be thought Ngoni but have no real claim to the name, find ways in which to identify themselves with the real Ngoni, and to impress upon outsiders that they share the distinction of that name.

III. NGONI SOCIETY AS A CULTURAL UNIT. It is evident that the field worker who tries to describe and analyse the society which is found in the Ngoni areas to-day has some difficulty in establishing appropriate and correct terms. Here is a society which is a compound of ethnic units, subdivided into clans according to kinship, stratified into ranks, held together by a ruling aristocracy and a strong centralized political organization. This society differs radically from that of a homogeneous community where the sociological structure has gone through a long process of integration or disintegration, or has remained static over a period of time. The Ngoni created their 'state', that is, their present political and social units, within a relatively short period by a series of deliberate acts. They brought with them a pattern of society from the south; they modified[1] it during their forty odd years of wandering and warfare; and they moulded it finally when they settled in their present areas. Within this deliberately created social structure the principles of centralization and rank were dominant. Based on these two principles the Ngoni set up, in an alien milieu, the institutions of chieftainship,[2] of military training, of systematized law courts, of recognized ranks in society, of patrilineal succession and inheritance, speaking among themselves a language foreign to the country. The resultant society, a compound of the Ngoni ruling aristocracy and the conquered indigenous people, formed the Ngoni state. So conscious was all this social engineering that old men to-day can give detailed accounts of the various processes, political, legal, military, by which the conquerors and conquered were brought under one rule.[3] Borrowing a term from European history,

[1] One striking modification was the replacing of the village as a small kinship group by villages of hundreds of huts, with an elaborate organization into hamlets.

[2] Using chieftainship in the sense of the Ngoni *inkosi* whose office and powers were very different from those of the surrounding petty chiefs.

[3] As one of these processes, the piercing of the ear-lobes became the 'tribal

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serve their own culture, so that they were not submerged in the very different cultures round them? The Ngoni themselves give the answer to this first question, saying, 'We fought with spears and shields; those others had only bows and arrows and sometimes guns.'[1] The making of these shields, which formerly gave courage and protection to the warriors, is to this day almost a ritual. To watch a chief working at one on the threshold of his hut, or a village headman and his friends cutting and shaping one in the kraal, is to realize the value put on them by the Ngoni. They refuse to make them for sale as curiosities, and several Europeans have told me that they have tried in vain to get one.

Having conquered by the shield and spear, the Ngoni maintained their prestige by their highly developed political organization. All around them were small chieftains owning a few villages with no integration in any large political unit.[2] The Ngoni state was focussed in the *inkosi*, the Paramount Chief, who was at once the 'owner'[3] of the land, the 'head'[3] of the state, and the 'father'[3] of his people. The Ngoni, as we have seen, are always ready to indicate those institutions and related traditions which mark them off from the surrounding tribes, and which give their state a cultural reality of its own. They point first to their language and their traditions of Dingiswayo, Zwidi, and Chaka as proving their southern origin. Other neighbouring peoples have vague traditions of wandering from north to south, or west to east, but the Ngoni know exactly where they came from and by what route. Their language is almost identical with old Zulu. I was told by many Europeans that it hardly existed any longer, and I was therefore surprised to find to what an extent it is still spoken and used. Most of the true Ngoni to-day are bilingual[4]; with the exception of a few very old Ngoni people, everyone to-day speaks one of the local vernaculars, Nsenga, Tumbuka, or Chewa.[5] Ngoni is the language of the aristocrats, and a large proportion of the true

[1] The kind of antique guns traded to the Chewa by the Portuguese and Arabs were no match for the Ngoni skill with the long throwing-spear or the short stabbing-assegai, and the bullets were such that the stout cow-hide shields of the Ngoni could withstand them. Hence the consternation of the Ngoni when the machine-gun bullets of the British troops pierced their shields in the Ngoni 'war'.

[2] With the possible exception of Chikuramayembe, Chief of the Henga.

[3] Translations of vernacular terms.

[4] Or trilingual if they know English too.

[5] The same as Nyanja.

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Ngoni understand and speak it. It is in fact one of the distinguishing marks between the true Ngoni and the rest. It is convenient for a chief to be able to exchange a few remarks with a relative or an important visitor in a language which the onlookers cannot follow, and I have also heard a chief do the same with one of his *indunas* during a case in court. When I played Zulu records on my gramophone the aristocrats and old warriors drew near to listen, while the nobodies who could not understand fell back naturally. It is interesting to see how this language test brings out the social distinctions based on family and rank, and produces generally an inferiority reaction among the non-Ngoni.

As other distinguishing institutions the Ngoni point out their dances[1] and songs; their former military organization with its related system of age grades; their political organization under the Paramount Chief with his hierarchy of *amakosana*, *abalumuzana*, *izinduna*, *amanxusa*, &c.; the system of courts, again a hierarchy, with the laws administered in them; their village organization which still preserves the division into *izigawa* or hamlets, characteristic of the very big Ngoni villages of old days; the Ngoni code of ethics, differing radically from the code of the neighbouring tribes, with its insistence on truth, chastity, and personal discipline; and their patrilineal descent in clans and inheritance of property. This last, superimposed upon the local matrilineal and matrilocal tribes, has created a variety of forms of marriage and inheritance which is almost the despair of the field worker. The Ngoni say proudly, 'We taught them to honour their sons' when pointing out how nephew succession has to a large extent given way before filial succession. The values inherent in certain Ngoni institutions have spread beyond their own areas, for one Chewa Paramount Chief told me he had for long admired the Ngoni system of filial succession and inheritance, and was now trying, in the teeth of much opposition, to introduce it into his country.

After I had been a little while among the Ngoni, and their chiefs and leading men had begun to realize my aim in field work, I was surprised by the help they gave me and the amount of co-operation they showed in my enquiries. Then one day an old *induna* revealed

[1] One Ngoni Paramount has prohibited any but Ngoni dances to be danced in his country.

When the first white people arrived as
traders and missionaries and officials, they were all impressed with 114
the power of the Ngoni Paramount Chief and the impossibility of [643]
getting any footing in the country without his consent and aid. 'Mpezeni[1] is a very powerful chief . . . and shows the greatest dislike to any interference with his governing powers. He has formed a powerful kingdom where his subjects are mainly Chewa, Chipeta and Senga stock, but his power is consolidated by a Zulu and half-Zulu aristocracy.' Such was the official view of the Ngoni state under old Mpezeni expressed by Sir Harry Johnston, and similar impressions are recorded of the Ngoni states in Nyasaland. If this was the European impression of Ngoni supremacy it is easy to picture the feelings of the Ngoni themselves with all their pride of race and of achievements in nation-holding, when for the first time a superior power [177] loomed on their horizon.

VII. THE ADVENT OF THE EUROPEANS. I have up to the present 101 ●
referred to the three Ngoni areas as if they formed one cultural unit. This is true of their earliest days, and to a large extent of the time called *chamtendere*. In spite of certain minor differences there was then a form of society and of political organization which was the same in all three areas, and they all possessed the same language, traditions, and aristocratic hierarchy. After the advent of the Europeans, however, it 177
becomes impossible to generalize, as both the manner and the results 184
of white penetration varied so much in the three areas. As a study in culture contact where eye-witnesses, both white and black, are still available as informants, it is most illuminating to compare the effects of white contact in Mpezeni's and Mwambera's countries. In Mpezeni's the first contact was commercial, in Mwambera's, missionary. The contrast between Ngoni society in those two districts to-day is startling, and is commented on frequently by the Ngoni themselves. 'See', say Mpezeni's people, 'the Charterland Company came to us. To Mwambera's country it was Dr. Laws. And Dr. Laws's men can speak English to-day and we cannot. Our cattle were taken by the Europeans; Mwambera's were not. That is why they *lubola* their wives to-day with many cattle, and we have only a few cattle.' They often referred to these differences as soon as they knew I was going from

[1] This was the old Mpezeni, son of Zwangendaba.

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the mental adjustments necessary to white contact. They still resent white intrusion and its results, economic, administrative, and missionary. At the same time many of them earnestly wish for a solution of the present tension, but towards such a solution there is no easy short cut.

VIII. Conclusions. Conclusions reached after the first period of field work are generally given with a certain reserve, especially in a complex field such as the Ngoni present. I think, however, that the conclusions in this paper can be stated with some certainty, and as dogmatic statements they form a basis for further field work. For they set the main problems for the detailed study of the Ngoni, and also of the Ngoni as a field for observing culture contact. In this article I hope that the three chief elements in the study have emerged, namely, the problem of Ngoni society as a cultural and political unit; the culture contact problems due to the contact, and part fusion, with local tribes; and the modern culture contact problems due to European penetration.

1. The Ngoni as a group must be regarded from two points of view: those who ethnically have a right to be called Ngoni, who are members of recognized Ngoni clans, with an acknowledged southern origin; and all those who live in the territory of the Ngoni Paramount Chief, and call themselves his people. These last were incorporated into the Ngoni state by the first group, who are still the ruling aristocracy, but the incorporated people now share in Ngoni 'national sentiment' and have made certain sociological changes in order to conform to Ngoni culture. It is their southern origin and their well remembered traditions of the past which confer distinctiveness on the true Ngoni, and on the state which they built. It is to their past they also turn for the charter for those institutions which are recognized as distinctively Ngoni, such as the Paramount Chieftainship, the hierarchy of rank, and patrilineal succession. Their historical origin and military achievements form also the charter for their former position as rulers of the country which they held before the advent of the Europeans.

2. The Europeans in two of the Ngoni areas destroyed the unique position of the Ngoni by defeating their armies. These armies had

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

# THE FORT JAMESON NGONI

*By* J. A. BARNES

## *Historical and Ecological Background*

101 THERE are about a dozen groups of peoples in different parts of Africa who call themselves Ngoni, and others not using that name have also been classified as Ngoni on the basis of common [131] origin. They are found in Tanganyika Territory, Portuguese East Africa, Nyasaland, and Northern Rhodesia. The name Ngoni is derived from Nguni, the designation applied to themselves by the Zulu and Xhosa peoples. The Ngoni have a common history of emigration from 175 the vicinity of Zululand, in Natal, in the 1820's, and of subsequent 101 migration northwards. This common heritage they share with the Ndebele of Southern Rhodesia. These migrations were occasioned by the rise to power of the Zulu chief Shaka, whose defeat of his chief rival, Zwide of the Ndandwe, led to the flight northwards of parties of Ndandwe refugees. At least two parties travelled as far north as the River Zambezi, one of them led by Zwangendaba, whose party crossed the river in 1835.[1] This Ngoni group reached the vicinity of Lake Tanganyika in about 1845, and there Zwangendaba died. His people split into several segments, led by his sons and other followers. One of these segments went on farther north, others turned towards Lake Nyasa, while one segment led by Mpezeni, a son of Zwangendaba, struck south-westwards towards the Bemba country in what is now the Northern Province of Northern Rhodesia. Here, in about 1856, they fought unsuccessfully with the Bemba, retreated southwards, and in about 1865 crossed the River Luangwa into Fort Jameson District. In 1868 they moved westwards into Petauke District, and a few years later moved eastwards to their present habitat in the vicinity of Fort Jameson.[2] It is with this group of Ngoni that we are concerned.[3]

[1] Poole, *Daze of the Crossing of the Zambesi*, pp. 290–2.

[2] Cf. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, pp. 459–70; Chibambo, *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*, pp. 1–36; Decle, *Three Years in Savage Africa*, p. 151; Elmslie, *Among the Wild Angoni*, p. 28; Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People*, pp. 312–15; Hodgson, *Notes on the Achewa and Angoni*, p. 123; Kapunzah, *Angoni, Uzimba ndi Miyambi*, pp. 1–11; Lancaster, *Tentative Chronology*, p. 86; Poole, *Native Tribes*, pp. 5–10; Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, p. 464; Stigand, *Natives of Nyasaland*, p. 126; Werner, *Natives of British Central Africa*, p. 281; Wiese, *Geschichte . . . der Angoni*, pp. 181–6; Winterbottom, *Angoni Paramountcy*, pp. 126–7; Young, *History of the Tumbuka-Kamanga*, pp. 108–17.

[114] [3] I worked among these people for a year in 1946–7 as an Assistant Anthropologist of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

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time controlled from a mission station just inside Nyasaland, so that many people crossed to attend religious services and receive instruction. From Mpezeni's own county it is easier to get to the hospital at Fort Manning than to the one at Fort Jameson, so that people wanting European medicine tend to go to Nyasaland for treatment rather than to Fort Jameson. Nyasalanders are for their part attracted into Northern Rhodesia by the market for foodstuffs among the urban population, White and Black, of Fort Jameson and by the greater variety of goods on sale there.

*Other Ngoni Groups*

The Fort Jameson Ngoni are conscious of their links with the other groups of Ngoni scattered over Central Africa, and of their similarity with the Ndebele and the Swazi and Zulu. The Paramount Chief is sometimes praised by the recital in the Ngoni language of the past exploits of the Ngoni, how they crossed the Zambezi, and how they conquered one tribe after another. On one occasion I heard someone who cannot speak Ngoni praise the Paramount by repeating, in Ndebele, which is similar to Ngoni, a praise of Mzilikazi[1] which he had learnt by rote. This oration was accepted without comment by the Paramount. Lancaster has recorded a legend that Lobengula[2] fled to Mpezeni after the second Matebele War, and that he died in the country.[3] Some years after his installation Mpezeni II was visited by a delegation from Mombera, chief of the Ngoni of Northern Nyasaland, which, it is said, came to ratify Mpezeni's position as Chief of the Fort Jameson section of the Ngoni. An important headman in Mpezeni's county, who bears the same name as Chief Chiwere of the Ngoni of Dowa District, still claims from time to time that because his namesake and alleged relative is a chief, he too ought to be a chief.

*Nsenga and Yao*

The Ngoni are on more friendly terms with the Nsenga of Petauke District than with the other matrilineal tribes of the region. Some of the kinship ties that were formed as a result of intermarriage between the two tribes in the 1870's can still be traced, and their languages are similar. Mpezeni III went in 1944 with his first lieutenant and twenty-five followers to visit the Nsenga Chief Manjawanthu, and he is expected to return the invitation.

[1] The first Ndebele king. [2] Son of Mzilikazi, defeated by the Whites.
[3] Lancaster, p. 83. Cf. *British Central Africa Gazette*, 15 May 1896, p. 2, and Posselt, *Upangula the Scatterer*, pp. 112–24.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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## V. EARNING A LIVING

### *Intertribal Trade*

439 There is little trade between the Ngoni and the neighbouring tribes, whose products are largely the same as their own. Fish is brought up from the Luangwa valley by Kunda and some of it is sold to the Ngoni of the Cipalamba, through whose villages the hawkers pass on their way to Fort Jameson. Bracelets are sometimes brought from Portuguese East Africa by Chikunda. The main attraction for these hawkers is Fort Jameson itself, and it is the fact that the town is encircled by the Ngoni that gives rise to trading with them. The geographical location of the town has also led to the growth in Ngoni [366] country of many stores and what are known in the vernacular as hotels, where tea and buns can be bought and where sometimes there is shelter for the night.

Of greater importance in the life of the tribe than these intertribal links are those arising from White and Indian economic activities. We may distinguish three zones of interaction, the shops both in Fort Jameson township and scattered throughout the district owned by Whites and Indians, the local tobacco farms, and the mines of Southern Rhodesia. The Ngoni have come to need cloth for clothes which they cannot produce themselves, and it is doubtful if there would be enough animals to provide skins for the tribe even if they did not insist on cloth. The need to earn money with which to buy clothes, soap, and other necessities can be met only by seeking employment on a farm, in Fort Jameson township, or farther off. A few people earn enough by selling vegetables in Fort Jameson, and there is a certain amount of maize and other cereals sold. These sales, however, do not provide sufficient income to reduce materially the extent to which people go out to work.

### *Control of Movement*

● 101 To the White traveller, Fort Jameson District is an island of tobacco in a sea of bush. To the Ngoni, the island is not so sharply demarcated, and its characteristic property is cattle, not tobacco, yet it still remains an island, surrounded by a sea of other tribes whose 101 traditions are different from their own. The ships that cross this sea 489 are the lorries. In time past, men used to walk to their destinations, [493] going by Feira to Southern Rhodesia, or across the Luangwa to Broken Hill. A few used to go down to Lake Nyasa, and thence to the

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
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Lupa goldfields and Dar-es-Salaam. Nowadays almost everyone goes by lorry, but now as then a man has to go a long way before he can arrive at an island of friends in one of the urban centres. This means that, for the Ngoni, emigration is a definite event, and does not occur as a result of a gradual drifting farther and farther away from the tribal area. Lorries run from Fort Jameson to Lusaka and to Lilongwe, and from Missale to Mtoko in Southern Rhodesia. There is also a lorry service from Lundazi to Fort Jameson, but this does not lead anywhere else, and is not used by Mpezeni's people except locally. Lusaka is on a railway line, Lilongwe is connected by bus and train to Blantyre, while Mtoko is on the way to Salisbury. It is these lorry routes which now provide the links with the outside world, and along which people and goods travel, the people in both directions, and the goods, apart from tobacco, mainly inwards. Use of these routes is controlled by the chiefs, the Administration, by economic factors, and by the weather. This last has been less important of late, and the roads are seldom impassable for more than a week at a time, however heavy the rains. In order to travel on the lorries from Fort Jameson a man must have a ticket, which costs £1 for the journey to Lusaka, and less for the trip to Lilongwe. The lorry service from Missale to Mtoko is free.

The Administration exercise control by insisting that no man shall leave the Territory of Northern Rhodesia unless he is in possession of an identification certificate endorsed by the Administration permitting him to do so. In practice, such endorsements are not usually made unless the man can produce written permission from the chief that he is free to go. This working arrangement is intended to ensure that men do not flee the country when there are cases pending against them, and to prevent unjustifiable desertion of wives and children. In fact men are sometimes given permission to go while cases in which they are involved are still unheard.

The emigration of women and children is further controlled in that there is a law[1] forbidding a woman to leave the tribal area except in the company of her husband, or with a pass to leave from the Native Authority. Sucking children are allowed to accompany their mothers, but other children under the age of sixteen are not allowed to leave the province without permission of the Native Authority,[2] while boys

[1] Ngoni Native Authority Order 24.

[2] Ngoni N. A. Order 39. The child must be either accompanied by its parents or else accompanied by a guardian on the way to join its parents.

II:Lancaster G-5 (ca. 1935) 1937 FR5 Ngoni FR5



# TENTATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF THE NGONI, GENEALOGY OF THEIR CHIEFS, AND NOTES.

By D. Gordon Lancaster.

## NOTE OF INTRODUCTION.

These tentative notes relating to the Ngoni are the result of many years of research amongst the natives in the Eastern Province of N. Rhodesia, with whom I have been in constant contact, firstly as a Government official and secondly as a friend. I have received the greatest assistance and courtesy from the Paramount Chief, Mpezeni Jere II, and I am further indebted to A. K. Jere, a son of old Chief Kapatamoyo Jere, without whose knowledge, assistance and tactful handling of the old indunas these notes and genealogy would never have been completed.

## *NOTES.*

(1) Zongendaba (Zwangendaba, Uzwangendaba) Kumalo, son of Hlatshwayo of the Ngoni tribe and his wife, Mquamache Nzima, was born near St. Lucia Bay in 1780 circa.

Zongendaba, when a young man, appears to have shown great promise as a military leader, Hlatshwayo, his father, and Ziwide, uncle of his wife, Loziwawa Nqumayo, appear to have been close neighbours and friends, and with other local clans for some time resisted Tshaka. The date of Hlatshwayo's death is not known, but Zongendaba broke away from the district or tribal area with a large following, after the second attack by Tshaka on the Ndwandwe Tribe, whom the Ngoni were assisting. Mzilikazi, a younger member of the Kumalo, after this defeat served Tshaka as an Induna[1] for approximately two years, during which time his bravery and leadership, under the eye of Tshaka, brought him promotion. Zongendaba and Gwaza Tole broke away with a following in the year 1823; Mzilikazi followed towards the end of the year 1825.

In the same year, 1825, Soschangane, known as Manukusa, son of Sigode and a cousin of Zongendaba's wives, Loziwawa and Sosera, broke away with a following of Ama-Ndwandwe and entered into Tongaland, Portuguese East Africa, through Swaziland. It is stated by native authorities that Zongendaba had with him girls and young women but no matrons, that they were few in number, that the Ama-Swazi were raided for cattle and suitable young girls, and that these were taken along with them on their northern migration through Tongaland and Lourenco Marques.

It is definitely stated that the following wives accompanied Zongendaba from their tribal area: Loziwawa and Sosera. These women were daughters of Nombhengula, brother of Ziwide and son of Langa Vimba. Nombhengula was a brother of Ziwide and not as is sometimes stated a son.

[1] [induna = military leader -- Analyst]

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# The Material Culture of the Fort Jameson Ngoni

## I

During the 1820s, the rise to power of the Zulu chief Chaka in South Africa led to a number of migrations to the north led by lesser chiefs who wished to avoid a clash with the Zulu armies, or who had already clashed and had been defeated. The descendants of these migrants are to-day living scattered over East Africa, from Lake Victoria to near Lourenço Marques. Many of these still call themselves Ngoni, a term derived from Nguni, a word used to describe themselves while they were still in the south. The leader of one of these Ngoni migrations was Zwangendaba, and it is his descendants who are to be found in Northern Rhodesia and elsewhere at the present time. The only group in this country recognised as Ngoni by the Administration is to be found in Fort Jameson District, under Paramount Chief Mpezeni. Formerly a tribe living in Lundazi District under Chief Magodi was officially called Ngoni, but they are now known to the Administration as Tumbuka. They represent the western salient of the old empire of Mombera, a son of Zwangendaba, whose descendant is now a chief in Nyasaland. This article deals only with the people under Chief Mpezeni.

Zwangendaba led his people northwards, fighting and taking captives as he went, crossed the Zambezi in 1835, an event that happened to coincide with a solar eclipse, and after passing through the present-day Eastern Province, died near Lake Tanganyika in about 1845. His party then split up, one son, Mpezeni, leading his followers south-westwards towards the Bemba and the Wisa in the Northern Province. From there they moved southwards, crossed the Luangwa, and settled in Petauke District. In about 1865 they moved eastwards and settled to the north of the Mpangwe Hills in Fort Jameson District. Some ten years later they went further east, and in 1881, when they were first visited by a European, they had reached

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
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VI.—*The Zulu of Nyasaland: their Manners and Customs.* By the Rev. DONALD FRASER, of the Livingstonia Mission.

[Read before the Society, 20th February, 1901.]

I SHALL take you to-night into British Central Africa, and describe slightly, a most interesting nation of warriors who live in West Nyasaland. To reach them we sail up the Zambezi, and the Shiré to Lake Nyasa. Landing at Bandawe, we strike inland for two days, climbing most of the way. After passing through richly wooded hills and valleys, we arrive at a great plateau, veined by constant sudden ravines through which rivers roar in the wet season, and trickle in the dry. The plateau is almost bared of trees, and is relieved by huge rocky hills which rise precipitously, from the plain. A low scrub covers the face of the land except where gardens are being cultivated, and the whole country is dotted by innumerable ant hills, each as large as a cottage. These are hoed by the villagers, and throughout most of the year, stand out gaunt and bear. Then the landscape is thirsty and inhospitable looking. The earth baked and hard, lies unclothed in the blazing sun. Cattle, sheep, and goats, wander about the river beds, and one looks almost in vain for any sign of vegetation to afford them food. But when the first rains come, the land breaks into smiling. The scrub puts on a dress of the softest green. The gardens and ant hills are covered with springing maize, and a thick garment of foliage, vegetation, and flowers, hides every vestige of the ground. Here we stand from 4,000 to 5,000 feet above the level of the sea. In the cold season, the thermometer falls as low as 40°, and in the hot, rises as high as 98°. But though the sun has a dangerous bite in midsummer, the heat is never oppressive, and the nights are cool and refreshing.

The people who live in this country, are a branch of the Zulu tribe, who started north 70 or 80 years ago on a great raid. The causes which led them to desert their own country are wrapped in mystery, and even the old men who can remember the days when they crossed the Zambezi, are unable to give any clear account of their starting. Probably it arose from one of the wars of Chaka, in

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
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which his army was defeated. The warriors knew that they would be killed when they got back to the great Zulu despot, and so they fled north, fighting as they went. As they went along, they conquered and absorbed the tribes, gathering Swazi, Atonga, and a medley of people into the nation. They came to the Zambezi, and on the day when they crossed it they were terrified by a total eclipse of the sun. From the Zambezi they fought their way to Nyasaland, then striking west, they passed through the Senga and Wemba populations till they reached Lake Tanganyika. On the plateau there the first great chief died. He had become infirm in his latter days, and travelled about riding on an ox. At his funeral a terrible massacre took place. One section of the tribe, eager to observe the old bloody funeral ceremonies, surprised and murdered all the widows of the chief that their spirits might accompany the dead chief to the other world. This butchery aroused great indignation among the others, and the tribe split in two. The butchers remained at the S.E. of Lake Tanganyika, where they still are a terror to the surrounding people. The great part of the tribe however, again marched south. One of the sons of the paramount chief was appointed his successor. His name was Mombera. His four brothers, Mpezeni, Mperembe, Maurau, and Mtwaro, were given large and powerful sub-chieftainships under him. This led to a scattering and readjustment of the tribe. Mperembe remained as chief and conquerer over the northern people, keeping the wild Wemba, and other tribes under his suzerainty. Mombera, along with two other brothers, settled in the highlands to the north-west of Nyasa. And Mpezeni went south and gradually got so far separated from the others that his people became an independent and insolated section of the tribe. A few years ago, the British Government levied war on Mpezeni, and his country came under the British Government.

In the north also, Mperembe was sore driven through his separation from the main section of the tribe, and at last his people rebelled, and with the aid of the Wemba, drove him south to join hands with his brother Mombera the paramount chief. Around Mombera the great part of the Ngoni nation remained. Some of his head men started petty chieftainships to the south among whom were Mandala, and Mwasi. Their people are called the Central and Southern Ngoni, and are well known in the Blantyre district as labourers, but they are not Ngoni. Few of them can speak the Zulu or Ngoni language, and they are a poor effeminate and cow-

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
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101 [175] ardly people compared with the wild spirits who remained under Mombera.

This tribe is variously named Mazitu, Vikoko, Abangoni, and so on, and readers of Livingstone's 'Zambezi and its Tributaries,' will remember his frequent references to the wild marauding bands of Mazitu. The word Abangoni, by which the tribe calls itself, [186] simply means "The people." They reckon themselves the blooded aristocrats of Africa.

[193] The prefix *aba* before ngoni, is simply the plural form of the noun *umgoni*, a single man. The country is called Ubungoni, and the language Chingoni. For the peculiarity of the Bantu languages, is that words alter their number from singular to plural, and character from noun to adjective, not by changing the suffix but the prefix.

197 The language which the Ngoni speak is a slight modification of Zulu—but they only use two clicks—the dental *c* and labial *q*. In our schools therefore we use the Zulu literature in which there are already nearly 40 volumes, and the best of these are the translations left by Bishop Colenso. Zulu is however rapidly dying [560] out, as the language of the slaves and of the surrounding tribes is becoming the vernacular of the common people. When Mombera's 175 Ngoni settled down in the watershed of the Ruhuru, they soon made their presence disagreeably felt throughout West Nyasa. Their marauding parties were always out on the war path. Dressing [926] in a frightsome garb of cock feathers, carrying a large shield and two or three stabbing assegais, they terrorised the neighbouring tribes. They used to sleep near some village which they wished to attack, and then in the early morning just before the light had come, with a wild war whoop they would sweep through the village, killing the men and the old people; then when they had seized the women and children and tied them together they would start back for the hills, driving with them all the cattle and sheep and goats that they could find. Their fighting was never done in the open. It generally took the form of a wild and sudden rush, and in a moment bleeding corpses were lying about, and the village was in flames.

The terrified people betook themselves to huge stockaded villages, others piled their villages in the lake itself. The Poka, and Henga [101] fled to mountain fastnesses, and built on the edges of fearful precipices, the Senga fled to the Luangwa marsh and built great protected villages in the depths of huge thorn thickets. And the land became

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
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barren with terror, till a great belt of uninhabited territory surrounded Ngoniland on all sides. It was sad to pass through this rich land, left to the wild beasts, to see mouldering smelting furnaces, and other signs of lost industries.

It was when the tribe was still in the height of its devastating tendencies that the Livingstonia Mission came into the country. At first the early pioneers were barely tolerated, and more than once it seemed as if they would have to abandom everything and flee for their lives. But gradually, imperceptibly the preaching of peace began to sweeten and purify the atmosphere, and the horrors of these fighting days became part and parcel of a dreadful past. Three years ago a new paramount chief was elected. At the great council the wild spirits of the tribe tried to rouse the people to celebrate the coronation with a great raid. They danced, threatened and raved, but the younger chiefs, themselves Christians, spoke eloquently for peace, and in the end peace prevailed, and the death knell of the past was sounded. And now there is no more settled, peaceable, law-abiding people in Central Africa. And this victory has been won not by the rattle of Maxim guns, not even by the wisdom of diplomacy, but by the daily teaching of the Gospel of Peace.

The political structure of the tribe is strong and conservative. The father of all the people is the paramount chief. His authority has descended to him through a long line of ancestors, the eldest son of the principal wife succeeding to his father's position. In some cases the head wife has had no sons, then she adopted a son of one of the other wives and he became the heir. The chief's power is nominally absolute, and he is surrounded with a certain regal dignity. It is impressive to see the aristocratic majesty that a great chief can maintain. Though his regal robes may not be more than a dirty bit of blue calico, which is not worth tourpence, he walks with a scornful dignity that any European prince might envy. When he listens in court to some great indaba his face is expressionless as granite, with an affected indifference he drinks from his great calabash of beer, and ladles ounces of snuff into his nostrils, while his poor subject pleads with passion and eloquence over a matter which may mean death or life to him. Yet behind his nominal power he is controlled and restrained by the voice of his council. His succession may be plain and acknowledged, yet he cannot assume the reins of government until he has been nominated by the sub-chiefs and councillors. Our present chief had to